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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMCONGEN, Lagos, Nigeria

NEA MESSAGE CENTER

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DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

September 22, 1952
DATE

REF :

1952 SEP 30 PM 12 48

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E.O. EXEMPTIONS

SUBJECT: Fortnightly Newsletter - September 8, 1952.

POLITICAL

Governor on Leave

Sir John MACPHERSON left Nigeria September 16 for approximately two months' leave in UK. A.E.T. BENSON to administer government, with L. GOBLE continuing as Act'g. Chief Secretary.

Conflict in Warri Province

745h.00/8-255 Newsletter 1 NEA IFI L UNA IPS

Reported 187 arrested, 50 wounded in fighting around city of Warri. Old quarrel between Itsekris and Urhobos over title of Oluwa of Warri (Itsekri chief) burst into violence after clash of groups demonstrating for and against Chief Arthur PREST, central Minister of Communications, upon announcement his plans visit home town of Warri. Visit cancelled and police reinforcements rushed in. Itsekri war canoe parties reported in large numbers on creeks of area. Markets closed, residents prepared for more fighting. Prest's position difficult as Urhobos blame him for recognition by Government of Olu's title. Rumored NCNC agitation to provoke conflict and embarrass Action Group Western Region government.

Lagos Town Council Inquiry

NCNC and AG still swapping blows in "Storey Commission" (through respective affiliates: Democratic Party and Area Council). Virtual paralysis Lagos Town Council due to mutual antagonism between all interests: the two parties, the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, the Council's Administrative Officer (Town Clerk) and private interests within majority (Demo-Alliance) group. Allegations of corruption not yet proven although some Councillors appear to have been more active as lobbyists for private interests of friends, associates and relatives than as administrators or legislators. "Undue influence" obvious in matters affecting sanitation, road maintenance and, in particular, allocation of bus routes.

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NCNC Politico Criticizes Western Region Medical Service

Frank OPUTA-OTUTU, NCNC member Western House of Assembly, characterizes Action Group-formulated free medical service in West as "political claptrap" and delusion. Necessary installation new medical centers in divisions without facilities not carried out renders improvement medical care impossible, he says. Suggests money spent on free care could better have been used to build new clinics, dispensaries, etc. Cites example of people of Ukwuani who must travel 75 miles for medical attention.

ECONOMIC

£2 Million Added to Peanut Marketing Board Reserves 1950/51

Nigeria Groundnut Marketing Board announces that despite lowest purchases to date in 1950/51 season, £2,000,000 added to its reserves during period. High receipts attributed to high Ministry of Food (UK) prices that crop.

Hides and Skins Trade Picking Up

Reports from Northern Region indicate good prices offered for hides and skins after long slump. Supply of hides not adequate as drought forced excessive killings and good peanut prices left cash in hands of cattleowners, making hides sales unnecessary for them. Shortage expected be temporary.

Local Paper Suggests Need for Nigerian Consulates

Lagos' Daily Success editorialized idea Nigeria should have Consulates in major foreign cities. Necessary, it said, in view international trade of country and new political status. Recent UK trip of Minister Commerce and Industries points need for economic representation. Paper accused "foul-mouthed British employees" abroad of misrepresenting Nigerian status and development.

Germans Warned on Nigerian Deals

Press release from Bonn carried by West African Pilot announces Economics Ministry German Federal Republic warned nationals in re Nigerian trade. Statement said Germans advised ship only on irrevocable letters credit on German banks. (Good adivce).

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INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Nigerian Gets First Top Regional Labor Job

F. C. NWOKEDI, Secretary to Minister of Labor, made Acting Senior Labor Officer Eastern Region. First African in Labor Department and second in Nigerian civil service history given such degree of authority.

Local Editor's Caux Testimony Challenged

Testimony at Caux Moral Re-Armament meetings by Kanu OFFONRY, editor Zik's Eastern Nigerian Guardian, has drawn heavy criticism by Kanu OKORO, editor Zik's West African Pilot. Offonry testified that MRA (which is staunchly supported by Azikiwe and wife) changed his editorial policy from one of "the usual abuse, hatred, and bitterness" to "one of fairness, justice, and accurate comment." Editor Okoro comments, "Since when has editorial policy of Gaurdian been one of abuse .....? Let our MRA zealots beware of what they say under the influence of the so-called Caux 'atmosphere'."

Libel Cases Against Nigerian Tribune

Okechuku IDEJIANI, American trained physician and former Ibadan University College staff, awarded £980 in libel suit against Nigerian Tribune of Ibadan. Court found Tribune's characterization as "quack" libelous in view Ikejiani's M.D. from University of Toronto. Front page case did disclose plaintiff did not have D. Sc. degree he claimed. Holds B. S. from University of Brunswick and M. S. from University of Chicago. Plaintiff NCNC member and friend of Azikiwe - Tribune is Action Group organ.

Cambridge Chancellor to Open College Buildings Here

Chancellor Lord TEDDER to open new University College (Ibadan) buildings on November 7, Foundation Day. Chancellor arriving November 16 and leaving November 20 so he may reach U.S.A. by November 24.

Zik Press UK Trainees Return

Four Zik Enterprises scholarship winners return from U.S.: Miss Veronica NZEKWU (Book-Binding), Ladipo ONANUGA (Circulation Management), Mb. ebo CHUDE (Rotary Press), and Lawrence AGBARAKWE (Motor Mechanics).

23 Eastern Regional Scholarships Announced

Eastern Region announces granting 23 scholarships plus two supplementary awards to Ibadan students and seven overseas. Subjects and member scholarships are: medicine (nine),

agriculture (three), engineering (two), arts (six) and science (three). Only U.S. award to S.A.C. NWANAGU for engineering.

Pilot Blames USA for South African Events

The Lagos West African Pilot carried feature blaming Britain and U.S.A. for South African anti-Negro policies. Also said U.S.A. "fast earning name of the greatest agressor nation as she supports the worst forms of aggression: colour bans, colonialism, currency monopolies. U.S.A. pretends be leader of free world but in fact she is leader of white imperialism." Article carried Johannesburg dateline, front page, but in fact written by journalist currently visiting Nigeria. Same statements later appeared in Pilot in feature signed by writer.

Robert W. Ross

Robert W. Ross
Vice Consul